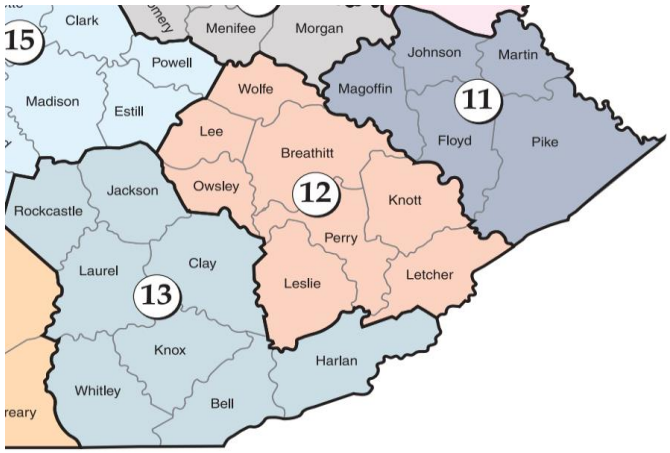
EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

Promoting *e*Goverment and Website Improvements

Eastern Kentucky University's Initiative



June 16, 2014

COMMONWEALTH OFFICE OF BROADBAND OUTREACH AND DEVELOPMENT
Promoting a 21st century economy

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Introduction

This document summarizes the efforts of East Kentucky University (EKU), and is one of three regional projects executed in the Commonwealth in 2014 as part of an Office of Broadband Outreach and Development (OBOD) initiative. Each of the three projects addressed a distinct set of broadband issues within a defined geographic area that were originally developed as part of a broadband plan in 2012.

The EKU project was a partnership between OBOD and the University. The working group was led by the EKU project team within the University's Department of Government, engaging with government stakeholders from the project area addressed by the plan.

The EKU Project Summary was prepared for OBOD by Michael Baker International, LLC.

Executive Summary

Following the creation of the East Kentucky Region's Broadband Planning Report in 2013, the OBOD made a commitment to pursue a project partner in the region to implement the report's recommendations. This was part of Kentucky's commitment to improving the region's chosen focus around broadband access, adoption and utilization to positively impact the wellbeing of Kentucky's citizens, economy and government services.

As a result of the planning process noted above, specific objectives were established in the plan:

- Develop **leadership and institutional capacity** to initiate and sustain *e*Gov broadband efforts at the local or regional level.
- Facilitate ***e*Government adoption and utilization** of broadband by educating local government in the project area.

After the implementation stage of this project, EKU made adjustments in focus that ultimately changed the project outcomes and metrics . Because of these changes and the time limitations of the project, OBOD limited EKU's project scope and closeout of the project was done early to enable redistribution of available funds to the West and Northeast Regions to accelerate the momentum of both projects for sustainability.

The EKU team decided to implement the following elements of the East Region plan:

- Building of regional leadership capacity
- Educating regional, county and local government about certain *e*Government services:
    - Community Communication
    - Property Databases for Communities
    - Online Bill Payment
- Making government organizations aware of how government websites can be improved to advertise and promote community assets (local/regional tourism)

The project provided recommendations for addressing these challenges on a local level, identified steps for achieving goals, and provided process and vendor information on how to build *e*Gov momentum around this initiative in the project area. The EKU effort was ultimately scaled back based on available funding and the adjusted scope for the project, which changed in mid-spring 2014 .

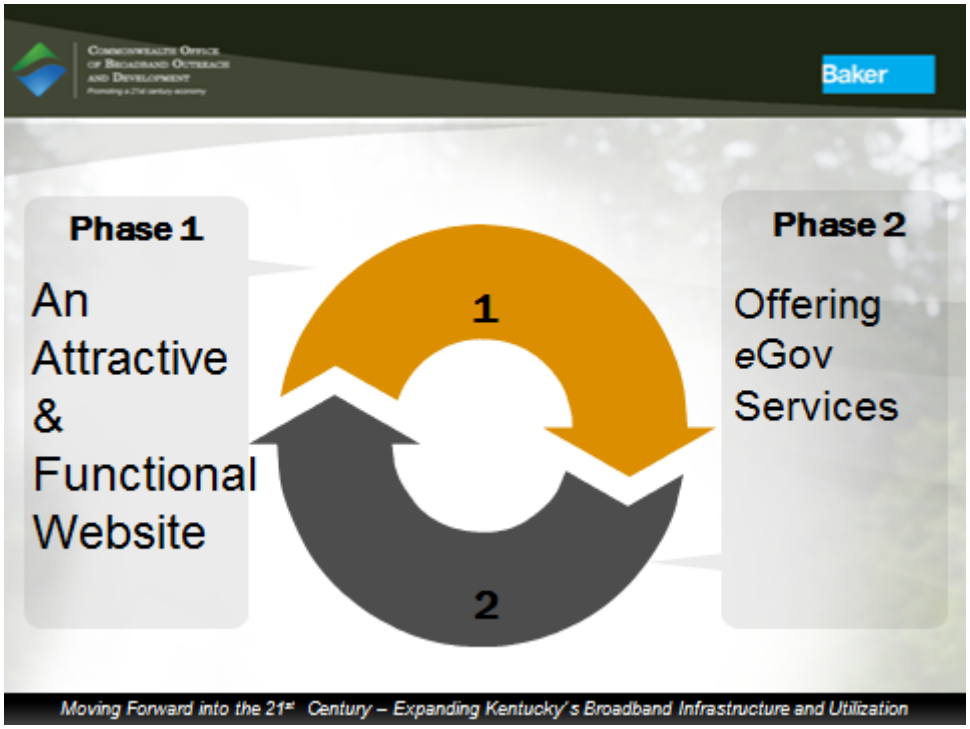
The strategic direction set out in the project was based on a shorter term project scope that was adjusted to reflect the availability of funds and a change in project scope from EKU.

Purpose and Focus

The EKU project was designed to inform communities on how to achieve better Government use of broadband through *e*Gov services. Through *e*Gov efforts, local and county governments in the Commonwealth have the potential to improve their communication with citizens, the "business" of the government enterprise, and promote a more dynamic/healthy/resilient community at the regional and local level. It all starts with information and awareness about *e*Gov services.

The EKU project was informed by the **2012 Broadband KY *e*Strategy Report** and the **Kentucky SBI Data**[1] collected over a five year period. Analysis of the information indicated that gaps currently exist in the availability and use of Broadband services, with some sectors of the economy slow to adapt to the increasing pace of the knowledge-based economy. The East Region broadband planning document revealed how certain aspects of the digital divide could be addressed in the East Region of Kentucky. While the Commonwealth of Kentucky could be an advocate and enabler (documenting best practices and developing tools and assistance programs), developing an effective information and awareness campaign at the local level could help to drive action and implementation on *e*Gov broadband initiatives.

[1] SBI – State Broadband Initiative: NTIA program; Investment of approximately $4 billion in the United States to support the deployment of broadband infrastructure, enhance & expand public computer centers, encourage sustainable adoption of broadband, and promote statewide broadband planning and data collection.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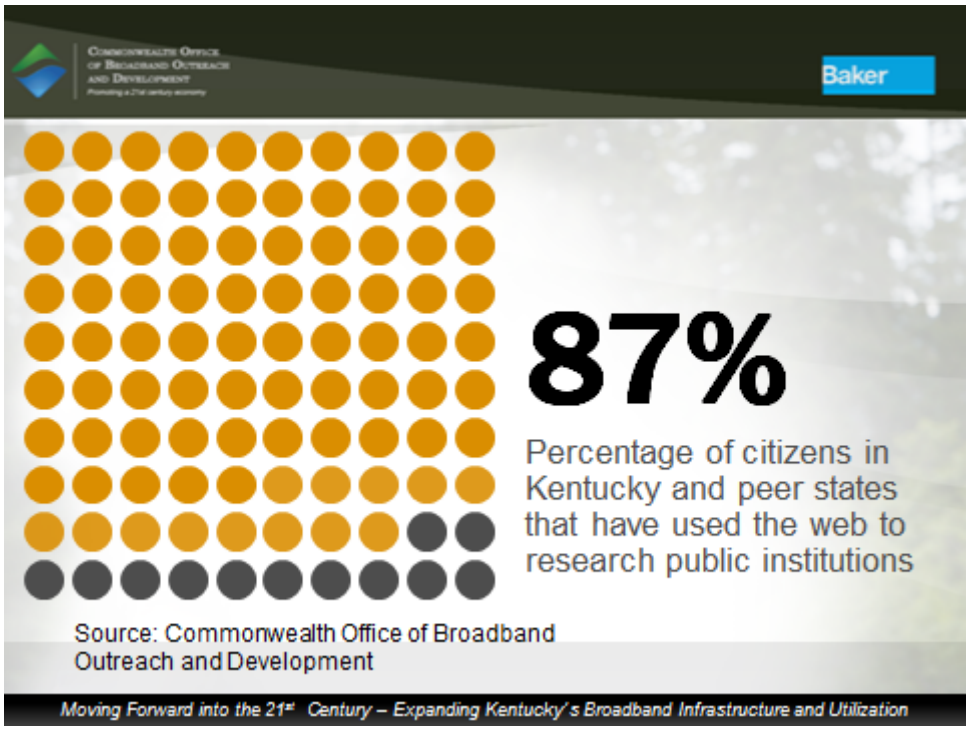
Phase 1
An Attractive & Functional Website
1
2
Phase 2
Offering eGov Services
Moving Forward into the 21st Century – Expanding Kentucky's Broadband Infrastructure and Utilization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87%
Percentage of citizens in Kentucky and peer states that have used the web to research public institutions
Source: Commonwealth Office of Broadband Outreach and Development
Moving Forward into the 21st Century – Expanding Kentucky's Broadband Infrastructure and Utilization

Government Benefits of a Strong Web Presence

- Increase visibility of your community to new residents, new businesses, and to tourists
- Help market your community's brand
- Help your community conduct business
- Help citizens save time and money by interacting from home
- Help local government engage with citizens

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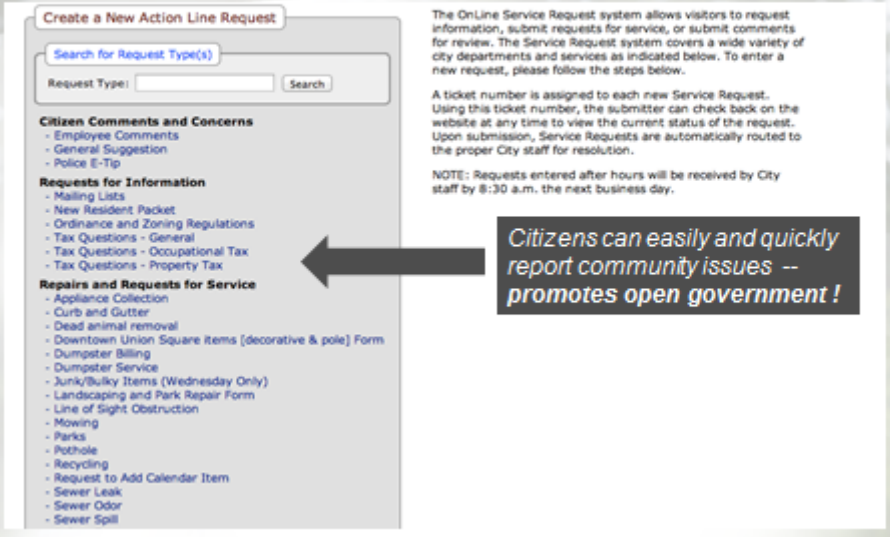
Available eGovernment Services

- Online payment of taxes, fines, or permits
- Interactive forms
- Event calendars
- Property listings—advertising and in-house planning work
- Maps and databases of the community
- Access web services through mobile applications

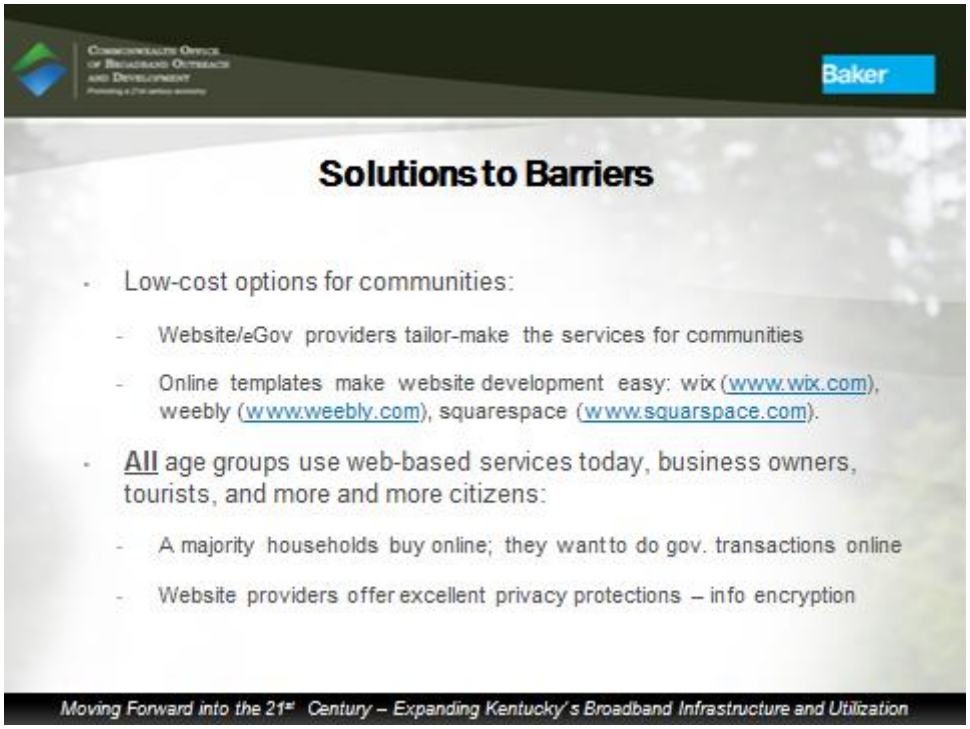
Moving Forward into the 21st Century – Expanding Kentucky's Broadband Infrastructure and Utilization

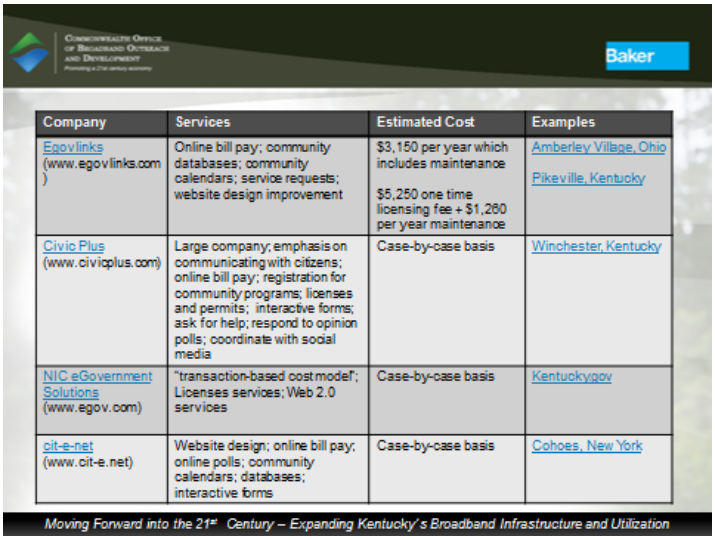
Source: Commonwealth's Office of Broadband Outreach and Development

Citizens can interact with the government and conduct business -- paying utility bills, taxes.



*Citizens can easily and quickly report community issues -- **promotes open government !***





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Solutions to Barriers

- Low-cost options for communities:
  - Website/eGov providers tailor-make the services for communities
  - Online templates make website development easy: wix (www.wix.com), weebly (www.weebly.com), squarespace (www.squarspace.com).
- **All** age groups use web-based services today, business owners, tourists, and more and more citizens:
  - A majority households buy online; they want to do gov. transactions online
  - Website providers offer excellent privacy protections – info encryption

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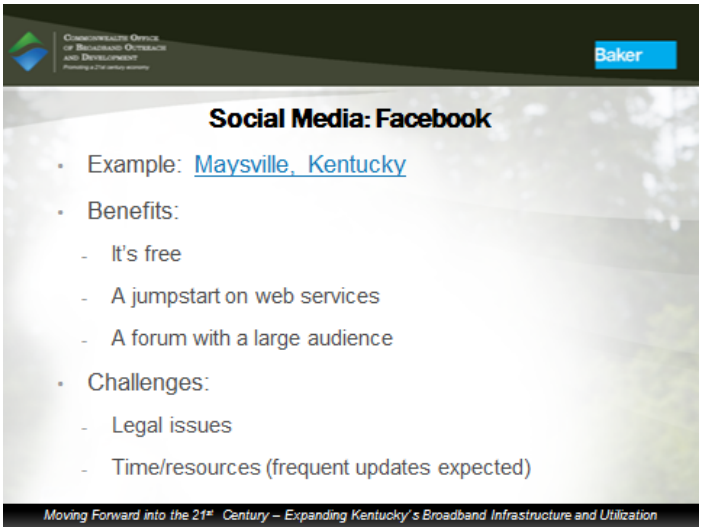
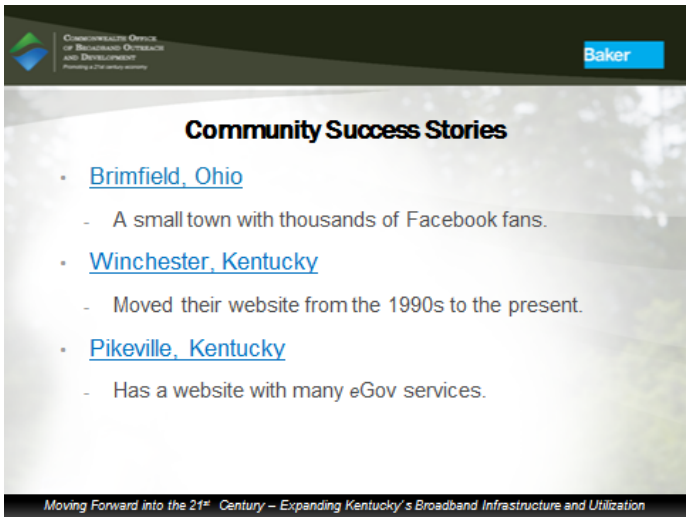
Company	Services	Estimated Cost	Examples
Egovlinks (www.egovlinks.com)	Online bill pay; community databases; community calendars; service requests; website design improvement	$3,150 per year which includes maintenance $5,250 one time licensing fee + $1,260 per year maintenance	Amberley Village, Ohio Pikeville, Kentucky
Civic Plus (www.civicplus.com)	Large company; emphasis on communicating with citizens; online bill pay; registration for community programs; licenses and permits; interactive forms; ask for help; respond to opinion polls; coordinate with social media	Case-by-case basis	Winchester, Kentucky
NIC eGovernment Solutions (www.egov.com)	"transaction-based cost model"; Licenses services; Web 2.0 services	Case-by-case basis	Kentucky.gov
cit-e-net (www.cit-e.net)	Website design; online bill pay; online polls; community calendars; databases; interactive forms	Case-by-case basis	Cohoes, New York

Moving Forward into the 21st Century – Expanding Kentucky's Broadband Infrastructure and Utilization

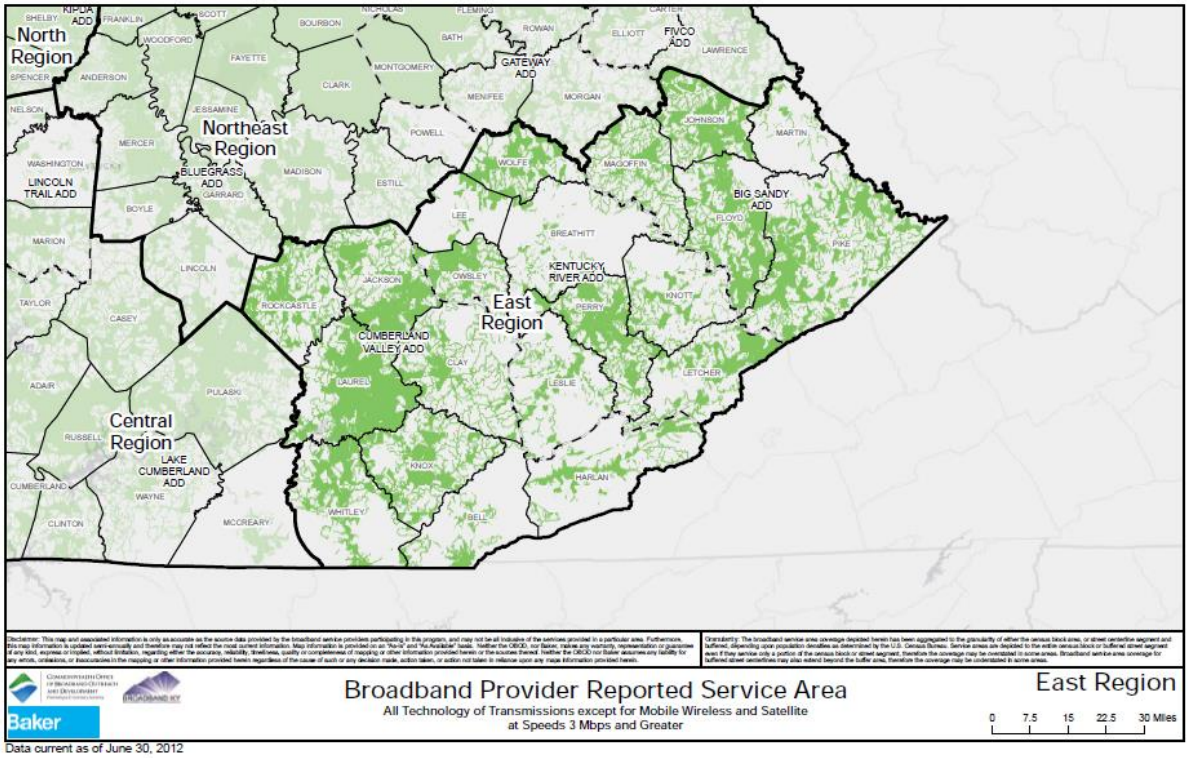




The East Project Area

Broadband is important to the current and future health of East Kentucky, its communities, residents, local government, and businesses. The evidence drawn from national, Kentucky-wide, and regional sources shows the digital divide in East Kentucky is very real.

According to Kentucky SBI provider data as of January 1, 2013, ***counties in the East region were well below the target of 4 MBPS.***



*e*Gov Internet Utilization

County and Municipal Government - Utilization by Region

Utilization by Region by Type of e-Solutions		
	Generic e-Solutions	Local Government Specific
	DEi	**DEi-G**
Central Region	5.22	5.10
Kentucky	5.19	4.55
East Region	4.51	3.08

Lower utilization levels have been shown to have important impact on the benefits from Internet access received by users (government /household/business) and their communities. Households with higher utilization levels demonstrate the higher use of activities that produce household income through both teleworking and home-based businesses. Businesses with high levels of utilization report noticeably higher levels of revenue generation from the Internet. At the very least, governments with low levels of utilization miss out on the opportunity to take advantage of improved operational efficiencies and lower costs that come with *e*Gov services in their enterprise.

Opportunities

- Provider interest in the East Region and successful community and regional Provider engagement strategies regionally show a potential for greater provider involvement
- Fixed wireless technology is increasing in Kentucky, and may be an attractive and viable infrastructure for last mile in non-metro areas. Fixed wireless has demonstrated the ability to increase both its quality of service (which has been weak in some areas) and connection speeds. Kentucky SBI data also shows fixed wireless technology as having the fastest statewide growth in 2012.
- Similar to a GRADD public-private partnership, there is interest in collaboration between communities and services providers. And in some cases this may include collaboration between service providers.

EKU Project Plan

Based on the core principles outlined in **Section 3** of the **East Region Broadband Plan**, this project document summarizes the work of the EKU leadership and how it contributed to the Commonwealth's two overarching goals:

- Broadband adoption and utilization to enhance productivity, skills, mobility, and employment opportunities for residents of Kentucky;
- Achieve access and digital inclusion for all citizens, institutions and businesses.

The elements and supporting information described in the East Region Broadband Plan serve as a foundation for the EKU broadband project. The objectives include:

1. Identify and help to develop the **leadership** needed to sustain *e*Gov broadband efforts at the local or regional level;
2. Facilitate outreach and education of local and regional government organizations on the value of broadband through the utilization of **online government services** (*e*Gov)

EKU adopted a strategy for building momentum for long term *e*Gov achievement throughout local and regional government.

EKU Short-Term Goal: Conduct outreach and provide education to county and local government regarding the high-value of broadband and *e*Gov solutions and services.

Identifying Local and Regional Leadership

In rural areas, lack of capacity and leadership has the potential to limit the effectiveness of community-based approaches. Identifying, communicating with, and developing motivated leadership for *e*Gov broadband initiatives was a key element of the East Region project***.***

In the East project area, the Kentucky River Area Development District (KRADD) was identified by EKU and OBOD as a leader organization, with the organizational capability to manage the initiative in their region. KRADD brought the following abilities to the East Region project initiative:

- An organization with a network of elected officials and stakeholders
- Local knowledge of the area governments, priorities, and which organizations might adopt *e*Gov services sooner
- A motivated Executive Director with a proven ability to work with communities

During the development stage of the East Region broadband plan and afterward, KRADD, under the direction of Executive Director Mike Miller, showed enormous leadership and initiative by actively engaging local governments about the broadband project -- working with local leaders who saw the opportunity of *e*Gov services.

EKU project leaders initiated outbound communication to local governments to identify interested communities, to identify ***broadband leadership in government and support for local eGov in the project area.*** While local government leaders in 2014 are more likely to be aware of the value of good Internet access in government, interest and awareness does not translate into action – financial resources in local government, missing technical knowledge and leadership can be harder to find in rural areas.

EKU engaged with key individuals, local stakeholders or stakeholder organizations to identify who could take on initiating and maintaining local broadband efforts in the future.

Specific *e*Gov Broadband Initiatives:

Online Payment/Transactions

a) Convening a meeting of representatives from utilities and other government departments at the county and municipal level in the project area to enlist participation and collective development of a requirements framework for *e*Gov software functionality, along with compatibility, capital (licensing) and operating costs;
b) Once the above framework has been developed, identify and assess options for implementing a collaborative online payment system for local governments and utilities;
c) Once a solution is identified that meets the minimum functional and financial requirements of participating stakeholders, develop a technology/licensing approach that enables stakeholders to login and participate in a shared online local e-government payment service.

Online Portal for *e*Gov

a) Convene a meeting of organizations in the project area interested in a broader and coordinated online presence for local governments. Establish a supporting working group to pursue a regional online portal for local *e*Gov.
b) Identify online resources in the project area and the issues, gaps, and opportunities for stronger local *e*Gov presence.
c) Identify approaches for broader community adoption and utilization of an enhanced online presence for an *e*Gov portal.
d) The working group will make recommendations regarding the desirability and direction of an online *e*Gov portal in the project area.

Recommendations: Future *e*Gov Initiatives Beyond 2014

a) Make KRADD the lead for the project area for e-government, with one or more working groups supporting specific *e*Gov broadband initiatives.
b) Continue research and pursuit of viable funding sources for *e*Gov in the project area
c) Recruit individuals and organizations at the community level in the project area.
d) Build on EKU's initial *e*Gov education and orientation sessions -- expand *e*Gov outreach and awareness through KRADD moving forward
e) Establish and maintain regular/ongoing relationships with Broadband Providers promote a win-win project strategy that leverages local provider's expertise
f) Consider other aspects of the East Region Broadband Plan when moving forward with an *e*Gov implementation program for the region

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